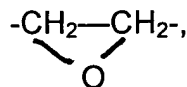


The elected claims stand rejected under 35 USC 102 and/or 103(a) as unpatentable over Jon et al WO 99/18782. Although as the examiner points out, Jon's composition is a dip not a gel, this does not imply that subsequent gel formation of the dip does not occur (see pages 1-2 of the specification).

The novelty of the present invention resides in the use of certain compounds which impart anti-gelling properties to a mixture similar to that disclosed by the reference and others having a propensity to form gels. This is achieved with the addition of one or more of applicants' compounds, namely an inorganic oxide, an epoxidized ester of a vegetable oil and/or an epoxidized ester of OH substituted or unsubstituted high molecular weight aliphatic acid. These compounds are absent from the reference disclosure. What the Jon reference describes are ethoxylated esters containing 9-20 ethylene oxy groups which are surfactants having no effect on gelling.

The structure of the epoxy group, with its free valences on the CH₂ groups, i.e.



is subject to ring opening which ties up free hydroxy groups responsible for gel formation. Conversely, the ethylene oxy group, -CH₂-CH₂- O-, lacking ring formation and free valences on both carbon atoms, is a stable moiety and cannot affect gelling.

In clarification of applicants' concentration of component (e), what is intended is that to a composition such as, for example that disclosed by the Jon reference or a similar composition having a tendency to gel, there is added 0.5-20 wt.% of the inorganic oxide and/or the epoxidized oil and/or epoxidized aliphatic acid. Hence the present definition of (e) is correct.

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In view of the present amendments and the above discussion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, notice of which is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Marilyn J. Maue".

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